A wise guy from Egypt

~ Wikipedia ~

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- Love your wife with passion.
- As for those who end up continually lusting after women, none of their plans will succeed.
- Do not blame those who are childless, do not criticise them for not having any, and do not boast about having them yourself.
- How happy he is of whom it is said: "A son is kind-natured when he knows how to listen."
- May your heart never be vain because of what you know. Take counsel from the ignorant as well as the wise...
- So do not place any confidence in your heart in the accumulation of riches, since everything that you have is a gift from God.
- Think of living in peace with what you possess, and whatever the Gods choose to give will come of its own accord.
- Do not repeat a slanderous rumour, do not listen to it.
- Punish with principle, teach meaningfully. The act of stopping evil leads to the lasting establishment of virtue.
- Listening benefits the listener.
- If he who listens listens fully, then he who listens becomes he who understands.
- He who listens becomes the master of what is profitable.
- To listen is better than anything, thus is born perfect love.
- God loves him who listens. He hates those who do not listen.
- As for the ignorant man who does not listen, he accomplishes nothing. He equates knowledge with ignorance, the useless with the harmful. He does everything which is detestable, so people get angry with him each day.
- A perfect word is hidden more deeply than precious stones. It is to be found near the servants working at the mill-stone.
- Only speak when you have something worth saying.
- As for you, teach your disciple the words of tradition. May he act as a model for the children of the great, that they may find in him the understanding and justice of every heart that speaks to him, since man is not born wise.

Ptahhotep was an Egyptian vizier (first minister) during the 25th and 24th century BC Fifth Dynasty of Ancient Egypt. He is credited with authoring *The Maxims of Ptahhotep*, one of the most early known books in human history, a piece of Egyptian "wisdom literature" or philosophy meant to instruct young men in appropriate behavior.

A passage in *The Instruction of Ptahhotep* presents Maat as follows:
Maat is good and its worth is lasting.
It has not been disturbed since the day of its creator,
whereas he who transgresses its ordinances is punished.
It lies as a path in front even of him who knows nothing.
Wrongdoing has never yet brought its venture to port.
It is true that evil may gain wealth
but the strength of truth is that it lasts;
a man can say: "It was the property of my father."

As the guarantor of both divine and terrestrial order and justice, Maat was the unifying principle of ancient Egyptian society.

Another passage from Ptahhotep presents Maat as instruction:
Be generous as long as you live
What leaves the storehouse does not return;
It is the food to be shared which is coveted,
One whose belly is empty is an accuser;
One deprived becomes an opponent,
Don't have him for a neighbor.
Kindness is a man's memorial
For the years after the function.

Another passage emphasizes the importance of Maat and how wisdom was also to be found among the women at the grindstones.

The lesson learned through Maat here is beneficence: the reader is advised to be benevolent and kind. An even stronger argument is being made — if you do not feed people, they will become unruly; on the other hand, if you take care of your people, they will take care of your memorial. The excerpt from Phahhotep employs Maat to teach the reader how to be a more effective king.

The Tale of The Eloquent Peasant is an extended discourse on the nature of Maat in which an officer under the direction of the king is described as taking the wealth of a nobleman and giving it to a poor man he had abused. Another text describes how the divine king:
educates the ignorant to wisdom,
and those who are unloved become as those who are loved.
He causes the lesser folk to emulate the great,
the last become as the first.
He who was lacking possessions is (now) the possessor of riches.